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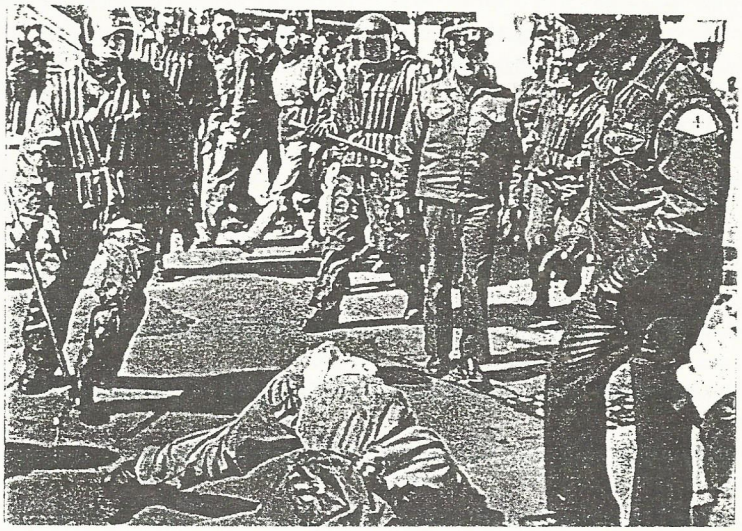
Keeping the People Uneducated



In December of 1989 (19-12-89) Minister of Education Claude Ryan brought a warming Christmas present to the students of Quebec. To lift a 20-year-old freeze on tuition fees. The tuition fees are to increase an average of $350 a year for the next two years, making a total increase of some 140%. To top this off, the Government will entitle an additional 10% hike to locale fees which universities will be able to add to whichever department they choose. The minister assures that the Grant and Loans Bureau will compensate for the fee hikes. Although the accessibility to these grants and loans will remain as present. Only 20% of the Student population is eligible for financial aid. What we will likely see if the lift comes to pass is a decrease of long term studies, more drop outs and a higher level of poverty throughout Quebec. As quoted by Andre

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Kay Poon Aquitted

There's good news in the case of Kay Poon, the 50-year-old Chinese nurse who, as reported in an earlier Ecomedia, was beaten by two police officers who then charged her with assault and disturbance. The charges have been dismissed because the crown (police) lacked evidence. During the trial, the two officers answered dozens of questions with "I don't recall," and on other occasions referred to personal notes which in some cases were almost identically worded.

DIRECT ACTION GETS THE GOODS

(DENMARK) An organization called "Illegal Apprentice Forum" has sent a number of forged gift certificates from a large shopping chain to needy students. The students there facecuts and new tuition rules. The ILF was carrying out the forgery to protest against the rules, introduced recently by Bertel Haarders, the Minister of Education. ILF became widely known a couple of years ago when they kidnapped Haarders' bicycle and vandalized it as a protest against cutbacks in transportation for students. (Ekomedia Arhus)

One Europe?

While the western media have been gloating over the advent of "democracy" in Eastern Europe, there has been relatively little mention of the plans of the European Economic Community (EEC.) In 1922, the countries of the EEC, including (among others) West Germany, Holland, Spain, Britain, France and Belgium will remove all trade barriers and form a common trading bloc. In many ways, this is similar to the Free Trade agreement that we have here in Canada with the USA. Though the implications of a unified Europe are many, one of the most insidious (and relatively unknown) is that of the "open borders" concept. While giving the illusion of free(r) movement between various countries, it is in reality a program to better monitor and control the flow of people between countries. In particular, this means immigrants and refugees trying to enter Europe, as well as their movement within it.

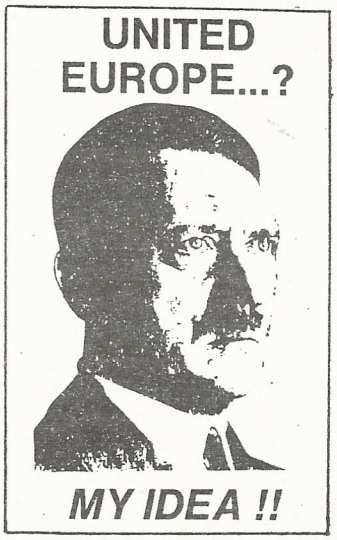
The foundation of this policy was outlined (in secret) by various top level European government officials over four years ago, in what is known as the Schengen agreement. This agreement includes plans that will make it more difficult to enter Europe, unless you happen to be rich and white. One such plan is sanctions against airlines who fly in immigrants and refugees who don't have the proper papers. Another is that a refugee refused by one European country cannot apply for asylum in another. As well, 59 nationalities will have to apply for a visa to the country they want to enter from within their own country. One can imagine what the answer will be.

To properly effect these plans, the various European police forces will be granted more powers. These will include the strengthening of urban and border checkings, and random checks will be made on the basis of physical appearance, such as skin colour. To better co-ordinate these activities, the Schengen Information Service (SIS) is being formed. This will be a computer data base that will contain information on over 800,000 people that can be accessed by any government agency or police force. There is also talk of bringing in more repressive laws and a European-wide police force to deal with "subversive elements."

This year, 40,000 children will die every day, mostly due to the economic policies of the EEC and the USA. Meanwhile, Europe will be closing up its borders to avoid sharing the wealth it has gained from the exploitation of the Third World. A certain fascist from the past certainly wouldn't disapprove of this. After all, this Orwellian police state that's inthe works might well be the Fortress Europa that Adolf dreamed about.

Support the Lubicon

Bernard Ominayak will be speaking on the land claim struggle of the Lubicon Cree and more at the U of T Medical Sciences Auditorium, 1 King's College Circle on Friday April 27 at 8 pm. Admission is $3. The Eagle Heart Drummers, Gayap Rhythm Drummers,and others will perform plus a slide presentation on the Lubicon struggle. For more information call 920-5213.



Quebec Education

(continued from pg. 1)

Gagnon, president of UQAM arts and literature students association." For them, education of the people is not important, money is everything."

Since January/90 to present date we have seen the students standing up and fighting the fee hikes. Between 400 and 500 students have been arrested and charged with mischief and some with assault, this has not stoped them. Federations of students have been formed and are planning to continue fighting right through to the fall or until the fee hikes remain frozen. They are organizing a General Strike and an increase of tuition fees Boycott. They will only pay the tuition fees they were required to pay prior to the hike.

We will keep you informed on any further updates.

Green Party at Crossroads

European Greens took stock of the relative advantages and disadvantages of pursuing electoral politics during a recent conference in Brussels. According to one report: "The advantages include increased access to and education of the public through campaigns and their media coverage; increased access to public and private funding; increased validity and status within the public and private institutions; an increased role in shaping public policies and effecting change from destructive to constructive practices. Among the dangers and limitations of involvement in electoral politics are an increased gap of accountability to the grassroots; the potential weakening of the grassroots due to the perception that 'we don't have to organize anymore because our elected officials will solve the problems,' the inevitable slow and incremental process of designing and passing legislation; and the tendency to compromise too much on basic principles in order to win seats, make coalitions and pass legislation."

As if to emphasize the latter point, the same article (Green Synthesis, March 1990) quotes a parliamentary assistant to one of the Green MPs in Bonn as stating that the party has evolved from "fundi" to "realo" positions (the fundis believe in keeping ecological principles intact, the realos in compromising them to get some sort of legislation passed.) He felt that the Greens should make "principled alliances" on the basis of "doing the research necessary to know the detailed positions of each party and then aligning with those Greens support."

The Greens in Australia tried doing that in the last election, and according to David Suzuki (Toronto Star 14-4-90 pA2) got shafted by the social democrats in consequence. Facing a tight election, Labour courted the green votes and spent close to $2 million for advertising aimed directly at Greens, with the result that Green leaders recommended that their supporters mark Labour second on their ballots (Australia has a multi-choice balloting system.) This green second choice enabled twenty Labour candidates to win marginal ridings, and their party to squeak to victory by a three or four seat margin. Five days after the election, a senior Labour official launched a tirade at the Greens, denouncing the sacrifice of economic growth at the altar of environmental protection and claiming that only rich countries can afford the luxury of high environmental standards.

Despite winning a few seats in some European parliaments, the Greens have little future in electoral politics; if they compromise to form alliances with other parties they get double-crossed, if not they remain a marginal force. This is even more true in North America, where the mass media sees to it that seats in parliament are monopolized by two U.S. and three Canadian parties, all of which are committed to economic growth at the expense of the environment. When danger to the environment is popularly perceived, this will be reflected inthe policies of the existing parties and the Greens will still be out of luck votewise.

The Greens would do better to forget about running for office, and instead use their resources to educate the public and to launch non-governmental projects to protect the environment and promote a non-growth economy. These might include:

— finding means for city dwellers to grow and purchase co-operatively their own organically grown food

—buying large tracts of land in parts of the country where land is still reasonably cheap and running them according to ecological principles

—taking over abandoned towns in rural or Maritime areas and settling them with people committed to alternative technology

—devising circus-style public information programs.

Ecomedia Toronto

Ecomedia is an international "wire service"that acts as an alternative to regular news services.We focus on news and often censored information on autonomous and anarchist resistance and analysis of current events.

Ecomedia Toronto is a local office involved in three main projects: a radio show every Wednesday on CKLN 88.1 FM between 7 and 8 pm on the "Word of Mouth" program; also another radio spot at 12:15am on CIUT 89.5 FM; and the bulletin in your hands. Published bi-weekly and free at locations around the city; subscriptions are $15/yr (26 issues) mailed monthly to cut costs. Order from the address on the front with cheques or M.O.'s payable to Ecomedia.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Anarchist Farm Needs Help

Dragonfly Farm is putting out a call for help .From mid-April to mid/late May and beyond they will need help GARDENING ;

* turning new and old gardens
* fertilizing all gardens with compost and turning the compost pile
* cleaning the barn and shitpiles and adding them to compost pile
* setting up water systems

FENCING;

* cleaning up wood areas
* digging post holes
* fence building and repairs
* debarking cedar poles

HAVING A GOOD TIME; Dragonfly Farm is a great place to visit whether working there or not and it is important that these sort of tasks get done in order to maintain their self sufficiency. Dragonfly will provide a place to sleep for two people at a time until the whether warms up then many more will be welcome plus two square meals a day for your welcomed toils. Please call them in advance at (613) 338-2709

Swedish Syndicalists Strike

Nearly three hundred Swedish syndicalists recently held a strike to protest plans of the government to forbid strikes and stop all pay increases. Political strikes are very unusual in Sweden, and this is the first time that SAC (the syndicalist union) has called for one.

The antistrike proposal is one more example of the tendency of social democrats (in this case the governing party) to betray the workers whose interests the movement was originally supposed to protect. Thousands of Swedish workers left the party in protest against the proposal, and only a "relatively good" pay rise offer to the council workers union prevented a mass strike. Surprised by the massive protests, the government took back its proposal.

For many years the SAC has been losing members and decaying from the inside, reflecting the lack of combativity and nonexistent class consciousness among the Swedish working class. In this context the SAC strike was a success, breaking through the wall of isolation, apathy and formalism that has infected Swedish syndicalism. The strike was by no means perfect; only 16 of 140 local SAC federations (totalling 14,000 members) participated. This is partly because the SAC's formal, slow structure isn't adapted for urgent class action; hopefully this can be sorted out. Meanwhile, the SAC is gaining in membership for the first time in many years, with several hundred joining in the aftermath of the strike.

In March, Stockholm anarchists and syndicalists organized a national anarchist conference in Stockhom. It ended with a libertarian manifestation in the city's centre, with about a thousand people turning out to hear speeches and music, and then participate in a demonstration which was attacked by police after a few hundred meters. A police van was pelted with sticks and stones and chased away but police blocked roads, beat up and arrested a 14-year-old boy and tried to prevent the anarchists from joining a group of 400 Kurds marching from Sergels Square to the Iraquian embassy. After an hour of chaos about 50 anarchists joined the Kurds; when the police tried to pull them out of the demo, the Kurds pulled them back. At the Iraquian embassy, the Kurds burned flags and threw stones.

A couple of weeks later, anarchists and other antiracists again clashed with police while marchng to stop a rally against immigrants. This "mass" rally turned out to be 30 skinheads and ten middleage supporters. (from: Brand.)

Sophia Cook Update

Sophia Cook, shot and paralyzed by a Toronto constable, astounded and surprised everyone at the International Women's Day rally by walking up to the stage to speak. and spending the afternoon walking around th IWD fair at Ryerson. She is still undergoing intensive physical therapy at the Lynhurst Rehabilitation Centre. Meanwhile, the constable who shot her was given another postponement of his trial for the minor offence of "careless use of a firearm," and appears again May 2nd, 9 a.m. at College Park (College and Yonge), Courtroom 502. Sophia is also pursuing a civil suit.